

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Teach for America

**Application ID:** 13ES145514

**Program Name:** Teach for America-Ohio

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant clearly indicates the repercussions and effects of an achievement gap experienced by low-income students and students of color. The low achievement levels are described as disproportionate to their peers of high-income status. The long-term effects of low achievement among the poor (graduation rate, ability to earn a good living, and engage in the community in positive ways) are the reason for targeting this population.

(+) The applicant cites two studies, one specific to North Carolina, as evidence of program impact on the communities which it serves. The implication is that the level of improvement in achievement under the instruction of AmeriCorps members will be replicated by Members at the designated Ohio schools.

(+) The applicant provides descriptive data that illustrates the need for intervention. Data indicate that students in lower socio-economic groups do not perform well academically and, therefore, do not graduate at the same rates as their more economically advantaged peers. Academic deficiencies also impair students' ability to enroll in postsecondary education and perform at acceptable levels.

(+) The applicant is requesting 180 full-time education slots for Members to serve as full-time teachers to fill positions in schools with teacher shortages in identified academic areas. This number should be sufficient to address the needs of students in the targeted schools. AmeriCorps member teachers perform the duties of an effective educator: preparing lesson plans, attending meetings, and collaborating with other teachers. Teachers are trained in using the state curriculum and use the Teaching as Leadership model in their classrooms. Duties performed by Members in the field should contribute to students' higher academic performance levels.

(+) Member activities address needs in the target area by committing to teach two years in low-income schools to influence a positive change in the schools and by advocating policies to assist low-income students and families.

(+) The narrative mentions that rigorous research studies show that AmeriCorps teachers' impact on student achievement exceeds that of other teachers. These include a 2004 Mathematica independent study that indicates that AmeriCorps members serving as Teach for America teachers contribute to student achievement that is higher than

other veteran teachers.

(+) The project will use a diagnostic test at the beginning of the academic year and periodic assessments throughout the academic year as well as an end-of-year assessment to measure student progress. Assessment measures include the use of SAMS (Student Achievement Measurement System) to measure student achievement and tie Member performance to students' academic gains. Assessment measures will provide data to measure overall change and illustrate and measure the impact that the program will have upon students.

(-) Evidence of sustained academic achievement or significantly higher standardized test scores than what currently exists is limited. Members leave after their two years of service with unclear evidence of lasting change as the program ends. Retention of AmeriCorps members as classroom teachers beyond the two years of service is not evident.

(-) The Mathematica study and Urban Institute study are nationally-oriented studies, and it is unclear whether these results can be applied to Ohio schools. The description of the implied impact of these studies lacks detail.